Achilles Tendon Rupture

Accelerated Non-Surgical Rehabilitation Program

Early motion has been shown to reduce ankle stiffness and improve function following achilles tendon rupture. This program presents an alternative to the other, more traditional methods of treating achilles tendon rupture (cast immobilisation and surgery).

After rupturing your achilles tendon you should seek immediate treatment and be placed in an equinuous cast.

First two weeks

Apply a non-weight bearing (NWB) 30° equinus cast as soon after the injury.

• This should be worn for two weeks

Weeks two to four

Remove equinuous cast and check position. If in good position apply equinus boot

• Apply equinus boot – non-weight bearing.
• During this time the boot can be removed for 5 minutes every hour for gentle range of motion (ROM) exercises.
• It is important that you do no stretching and that the foot is not flexed up beyond neutral.
• If you are unsure about this, discuss it with your doctor.

Weeks four to six

Adjust boot to 10° equinus, remain non-weight bearing, for further 2 weeks

• Still wearing the boot at night
• No stretching, but ROM exercises as above.
**Weeks six to eight**

0° boot from the 6 week post-injury mark for 2 weeks

- You can begin to weight bear in the boot at this stage and we expect you to be fully weight bearing by the end of the two weeks.
- You can now remove the boot at night, but you must wear it through the day.
- It can still be removed for 5 minutes every hour for gentle ROM exercises, but no stretching or bringing the foot up beyond neutral.
- If you are unsure about this, discuss it with your doctor.

**Eight weeks**

After 8 weeks of splinting, you can come out of the boot and

- Start a strengthening programme by rising up on your toes, supporting most of your weight on your good leg and putting more weight on your injured leg as you feel comfortable.
- When you can support your weight on one leg, your strengthening programme can be more aggressive. Be very cautious with stretching, start slowly after 8 weeks.
- If the Achilles appears to have healed long, we will arrange for you to have a heel raise for your shoe and possibly surgical review.

*A review and clinical check with your doctor at each stage of the protocol is needed.*

**Reference**

*Early Motion for Achilles Tendon Ruptures: Is Surgery Important?*

B Twaddle and P Poon